

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair Broadcasting recently refused to air one of the major networks's programs in which the names of all the American soldiers who died were read. It struck me as a very political gesture at the time and I was surprised to learn that they would be airing a very anti-Kerry film as "news" when it is obviously an attempt to influence voters. It will be the same thing if a major broadcaster decided to air "Fahrenheit 9/11" as a news item.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.